

Friday 25 August 2017

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**SOUTH  
AUSTRALIAN  
RESEARCH &  
DEVELOPMENT  
INSTITUTE  
PIRSA**

## Giant Cuttlefish continue to thrive at Point Lowly

The Giant Australian Cuttlefish spawning population at Point Lowly near Whyalla continues to thrive, a promising result for one of the State's most iconic species.

Population numbers have increased since 2013's record low of 13,492, compared with a significantly higher population of 127,992 recorded in June 2017.

Researchers from the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) completed their annual population survey, with divers counting the Cuttlefish and estimating their size at 10 sites around Point Lowly in May, June and July.

Under the State Government's management of this iconic species, a fishing closure for Cuttlefish in the northern Spencer Gulf is in place until 15 February 2018 and extends to all waters north of Arno Bay on the Eyre Peninsula to Wallaroo on the Yorke Peninsula.

This is in addition to a permanent cephalopod (squid, cuttlefish and octopus) fishing closure in the waters of False Bay.

SARDI's 2017 results will help inform future fishing management arrangements including the temporary closure, which will be reviewed with a further announcement in later this year.

### Quotes attributable to Dr Mike Steer, Senior Research Scientist, SARDI

It is fantastic to once again see large numbers of Giant Australian Cuttlefish aggregate in northern Spencer Gulf.

This year's population estimate is the third highest recorded over the last decade. The last five years of research has clearly demonstrated the population's capacity to rebound from low numbers very quickly.

### Background

Each winter, thousands of Giant Australian Cuttlefish gather in the northern Spencer Gulf to spawn. It is the only known dense aggregation in the world.

In July 2012, a working group was established to coordinate a response to concerns about the decline in population. The State Government implemented a Cuttlefish closure in March 2013 as a precautionary measure while research, led by SARDI into the behaviour of the Giant Cuttlefish, was underway.

For further information on the northern Spencer Gulf cuttlefish closure visit [http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/fishing/closures\\_and\\_aquatic\\_reserves/fishing\\_closures](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/fishing/closures_and_aquatic_reserves/fishing_closures)





2 June 2017

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**PRIMARY  
INDUSTRIES  
& REGIONS SA  
PIRSA**

## Thousands of Cuttlefish converge on northern Spencer Gulf

Tens of thousands of Giant Australian Cuttlefish have swum into breeding grounds at the top of the northern Spencer Gulf, as the species breeding season gets underway.

Researchers from the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) have started the 2017 annual survey of this iconic species.

Recent surveys have found the population has steadily risen from 57,317 in 2014, 130,771 in 2015 to 177,092 in 2016 due to favourable natural conditions.

Fishers are reminded that fishing for Cuttlefish in the northern Spencer Gulf is prohibited, under the State Government's management of this iconic species.

The closure of Cuttlefish fishing until 15 February 2018 extends to all waters north of Arno Bay on the Eyre Peninsula, to Wallaroo on the Yorke Peninsula. This is in addition to a permanent cephalopod (squid, cuttlefish and octopus) fishing closure in the waters of False Bay.

While the targeting of squid and octopus in the cuttlefish closure zone is allowed, anyone who catches a cuttlefish should release it back into the water immediately and unharmed.

For further information on the northern Spencer Gulf cuttlefish closure visit:

[www.pir.sa.gov.au/fisheries/closures/closed\\_areas/cuttlefish\\_closure/map\\_of\\_cuttlefish\\_closure\\_area](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/fisheries/closures/closed_areas/cuttlefish_closure/map_of_cuttlefish_closure_area)

### Quotes attributable to Dr Mike Steer, Senior Research Scientist, SARDI

It is fantastic to see large numbers of Giant Australian Cuttlefish returning to the northern Spencer Gulf in recent years.

We have started the 2017 surveys, where divers count Cuttlefish and estimate their size at 10 sites around Point Lowly in May, June and July.

From this, we can estimate total abundance and biomass of the spawning population. We also collect habitat and water quality information to assess the relative condition of the environment.

### Quotes attributable to PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture Director Operations, Peter Dietman

The fishing closure is in place to protect this iconic species during part of its critical breeding season.

We encourage people to visit the area and dive with the Cuttlefish while species are in our pristine waters – it really is a great sight.



The closure applies to the targeting and take of Cuttlefish, so any Cuttlefish inadvertently caught must be immediately and carefully returned to the water.

If you are fishing outside of the False Bay area but within the northern Spencer Gulf, you are still able to continue to fish for squid and octopus.

### **Background**

The State Government implemented a Cuttlefish closure in March 2013 as a precautionary measure while research into the behaviour of the Giant Cuttlefish was underway.

Surveys of the population indicate that numbers are on the rise.

The Giant Australian Cuttlefish is one of the largest cuttlefish species in the world.

# NEWS RELEASE



Government of  
South Australia

## Hon Geoff Brock MP

Minister for Regional Development  
Minister for Local Government

Monday, 21 November 2016

### **Tourism cash injection for Whyalla's iconic cuttlefish attraction**

Whyalla's growing tourism industry has received a boost with the announcement of an Upper Spencer Gulf and Outback Futures Program grant of \$85,000 towards upgrading visitor facilities at the cuttlefish aggregation area near the city.

The Giant Australian Cuttlefish is iconic to Whyalla, and its surrounding waters are each year home to the largest aggregation in the world of these creatures, providing a tourism experience unrivalled in Australia.

Overseen by Whyalla City Council, the \$205,000 project will enhance the tourism offering in the city, giving better access to the cuttlefish viewing area for divers, snorkelers and non-divers alike.

Road upgrades and a new car park will allow a wider range of vehicles, including coaches, to access the site, while weather protection, seating and interpretive signage will improve visitors' experience.

The project has also received \$40,000 support from Port Bonython Fuels Pty Ltd to progress the upgrade.

### **Background**

The \$2 million Upper Spencer Gulf and Outback Futures Program is a once-off grants program, which opened in November last year in recognition of the challenges brought about by the downturn of the resources sector and the closure of the Port Augusta power station and Leigh Creek coal mine.

The program supports the delivery of small projects contributing to the economic diversification, resilience and capacity building of Upper Spencer Gulf and Outback communities, creating sustainable economic benefits to the region and the State.

This project supports the State Government's economic priority of 'South Australia – a growing destination choice for international and domestic travellers'.

### **Quotes attributable to Regional Development Minister Geoff Brock**

The enhancements to this existing tourism site will give Whyalla the opportunity to grow cuttlefish tourism and promote the regional city as a tourism destination.

This project will enhance the economic value of tourism, support and diversify the economy and create opportunities for new ventures and tour operators in Whyalla and surrounds.

Retail and hospitality, transport and accommodation sectors will all benefit directly through increased economic activity within Whyalla's visitor economy.

Thirteen construction jobs, using many local contractors, will be created as a result of this project.

State, local and regional development agencies have clearly identified tourism as critical to the economic future of Whyalla and surrounding areas.

### **Quotes attributable to Lyn Breuer, Mayor, Whyalla City Council**

Council has recognised the need and opportunity to develop the visitor economy and the significance of the Cuttlefish to Whyalla and South Australia.

Seizing this opportunity means developing suitable access to the cuttlefish site and offering facilities that will enhance visitors' experience while reflecting the uniqueness of the area and the wildlife.

Council has extensively consulted with current users of the area, and with the broader diving community, to ensure what we're developing will suit their needs.

We are very grateful to the State Government for backing our vision with this grant, as this upgrade is another step in our broader tourism strategic plan for Whyalla.

### **Quote attributable to Mr Yasuyuki Suzuki, Chief Executive Officer, Port Bonython Fuels Pty Ltd**

As a contributing corporate citizen of the region, we are very pleased to have supported this project which will improve the cuttlefish tourism experience for visitors coming to Whyalla.

# NEWS RELEASE



Government of  
South Australia

## Leon Bignell MP

Minister for Tourism

Wednesday, 17 August 2016

### Return of Giant Australian Cuttlefish and a boost for Eyre Peninsula

The population of South Australia's iconic Giant Australian Cuttlefish is continuing to increase, attracting visitors to Point Lowly and boosting tourism in the northern Spencer Gulf region.

Tourism and Fisheries Minister Leon Bignell will today swim with the iconic Cuttlefish – which have increased in numbers from 13,000 to 177,000 during the past three years.

The State Government has been working with local tourism operators to ensure they get the support they need to keep attracting visitors to the region, with discussions about a cuttlefish viewing platform already underway.

The best time to see the Cuttlefish is before August 31 – when the spawning season typically ends. Next year's season starts on May 1.

### Quotes attributable to Tourism and Fisheries Minister Leon Bignell

For a few years, the Cuttlefish mysteriously declined and it is wonderful news they are back in abundance. They are an iconic species and a much-needed drawcard for the region.

What we are seeing now at Point Lowly is the biggest increase in Giant Australian Cuttlefish in more than 15 years.

Visitors dive in the shallow waters and watch the Cuttlefish light up spectacularly during mating rituals.

We know how important they are – not just environmentally – but for the region's visitor economy so we will continue to monitor these incredible animals at Point Lowly.

We will also continue working with local tourism operators to make sure they get the support they need. For example, a viewing platform or glass bottom boat would allow visitors to have an up-close encounter with the Cuttlefish without having to enter the water, potentially opening this experience up to a wider market.

### Background

Each winter, tens of thousands of Giant Australian Cuttlefish gather on a reef in the northern Spencer Gulf to spawn. It is the only known dense aggregation the world.

A working group was established in July 2012 to coordinate a response to concerns about the falling population and a 2013 survey showed the annual spawning aggregation had declined by about 90 percent over 13 years.

The research is being led by the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI).

Media Contact: Simonne Reid 0400 650 951

The State Government, through the South Australian Tourism Commission and DEWNR, also recently met with key stakeholders and tourism operators in Whyalla. In the 12 months to March 2016, more than 400,000 intrastate, interstate and international tourists visited the Eyre Peninsula and we want this number to continue to rise.

The State Government has invested \$70 million in additional tourism funding in the past two years and our goal is to have an \$8 billion visitor economy by 2020 and create even more jobs in the regions.



## Minister Leon Bignell

Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

Sunday, 27 September, 2015

### Cuttlefish numbers on the rise again

There has been another increase in Giant Australian Cuttlefish numbers - the second annual consecutive rise in the species population.

Fisheries Minister Leon Bignell said the Giant Cuttlefish population in northern Spencer Gulf had increased by 128 per cent to 130,771 compared to 57,000 last year.

"Giant Australian Cuttlefish is an iconic South Australian species and visitors from all over the world come here specifically to see them," Mr Bignell said.

"Just a few years ago the northern Spencer Gulf cuttlefish population had significantly declined. However, research revealed the iconic species was not adversely affected by habitat loss, metal contaminants or by-catches.

"This year's survey by the South Australian Research and Development Institute shows conditions have been very favourable over the last two spawning seasons - which occurs at Point Lowly near Whyalla.

"This second increase is great news for the marine environment, regional tourism and the northern Spencer Gulf community.

"The Whyalla Cuttlefish Citizen Scientist Group has again been active this year, undertaking surveys throughout the season to complement SARDI's formal monitoring program.

"It's so good to see the willingness and enthusiasm of local divers to get involved in the research and it goes to show just how valued this remarkable species is."

Chief Executive of Conservation Council SA, Craig Wilkins, said the results were encouraging.

"The Giant Australian Cuttlefish are the rock stars of South Australia's marine environment," he said.

"This year's numbers provide a promising sign the population is recovering from the dramatic low seen in 2013. That's tremendous news," Mr Wilkins said.

Mr Bignell said the State Government had been investigating what caused the population decline in 2013 and the research was due to be completed by the end of this year.

"The exact cause of the decline remains difficult to pinpoint but ongoing research is helping to find out more about the population," he said.

Media contact: Simonne Reid – 0400 650 951



## Minister Leon Bignell

Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

Thursday, 4 June, 2015

### Giant Cuttlefish research rules out causes for decline

Research into Giant Australian Cuttlefish has revealed the iconic species was not adversely affected by habitat loss, metal contaminants or by-catches.

Fisheries Minister Leon Bignell today released the *Surveying, Searching and Promoting Giant Australian Cuttlefish Spawning Activity in Northern Spencer Gulf* report.

"Last year, for the first time in six years, there was a population increase of Cuttlefish with 57,317 reported, compared to 13,492 the year before," Mr Bignell said.

"The Cuttlefish working group is cautiously optimistic about this increase and has committed to continue its population monitoring survey."

Formed in 2012, the working group has undertaken a number of research projects to investigate concerns about the species' decline.

"While the exact cause of the decline remains difficult to pinpoint to a specific origin, the research has been valuable in eliminating possible causes," Mr Bignell said.

"With this year's Giant Australian Cuttlefish breeding season now underway, the community is also reminded of opportunities to contribute information on sightings.

"Experienced divers are encouraged to join a Whyalla-based Giant Cuttlefish citizen science group and gather data."

In February, the State Government extended the temporary closure to all fishing for Cuttlefish in northern Spencer Gulf until 15 February 2016.

The closure included all waters north of a line commencing near Arno Bay on Eyre Peninsula to Wallaroo on Yorke Peninsula. It applies to the targeting and take of Cuttlefish, with any Cuttlefish caught to be immediately and carefully returned to the water.

The research is being led by South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI), the research division of Primary Industries and Regions SA, the University of Adelaide and the Environment Protection Authority.

It has been funded by both State and Federal Governments and the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC).

To read the report visit: [www.pir.sa.gov.au/cuttlefish](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/cuttlefish)

Media contact: Simonne Reid – 0400 650 951



## Minister Leon Bignell

Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

Wednesday, 11 February, 2015

### Extension of northern Spencer Gulf cuttlefish closure

The temporary closure to all fishing for Cuttlefish in northern Spencer Gulf has been extended until 15 February 2016 as part of the State Government's management of the iconic species.

The closure includes all waters north of a line commencing near Arno Bay on Eyre Peninsula, to Wallaroo on Yorke Peninsula. It is in addition to the permanent cephalopod (squid, cuttlefish and octopus) fishing closure in the waters of False Bay.

Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Minister Leon Bignell said the closure, initially implemented in March 2013, was a precautionary measure while research into the behaviour of the Giant Cuttlefish in the northern Spencer Gulf region continues.

"This closure applies to the targeting and take of Cuttlefish, so any Cuttlefish inadvertently caught must be immediately and carefully returned to the water," Mr Bignell said.

"However if you are fishing outside the False Bay area but within the northern Spencer Gulf closure area you will still be able to continue to fish for squid and octopus."

Mr Bignell said various research projects overseen by the Government's Cuttlefish Working Group are helping to provide some insights into Giant Australian Cuttlefish.

"The population dynamics of Cuttlefish in northern Spencer Gulf are complex.

"Last year's survey recorded the first population increase of Cuttlefish recorded in six years, 57,317, up from the 2013 figures of 13,492.

"However until we can confirm from this year's survey that this upward trend is ongoing, management measures such as the northern Spencer Gulf closure need to remain in place."

Mr Bignell said commitment by all levels of government would help to find out more about this iconic species.

"There are a number of projects underway as part of \$805,000 in research funding granted by the State Government and the Commonwealth. This work will assist in determining the future management actions required to ensure their sustainability and health."

For further information on the northern Spencer Gulf cuttlefish closure visit:

[www.pir.sa.gov.au/fisheries/closures/closed\\_areas/cuttlefish\\_closure/map\\_of\\_cuttlefish\\_closure\\_area](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/fisheries/closures/closed_areas/cuttlefish_closure/map_of_cuttlefish_closure_area).

Media contact: Clayton Boundey – 0400 821 811



# News Release Minister Gail Gago

Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries  
Minister for Forests  
Minister for Regional Development  
Minister for the Status of Women  
Minister for State/Local Government Relations

EMBARGOED UNTIL 6am: Thursday, 5 September, 2013

## Research expanding knowledge on Giant Australian Cuttlefish

A suite of research projects are helping to shed light on the reasons for and ways to combat the Giant Australian Cuttlefish population's decline in northern Spencer Gulf.

Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Minister Gail Gago said a recently commenced study is investigating the potential impacts of noise and turbidity from shipping traffic on the animal.

"The University of Adelaide has received funding of \$150,000 from the Australian Government's Sustainable Regional Development program for the study," Ms Gago said.

The various projects commenced during the 2013 breeding season – made possible with State and Federal Government funding of \$715,000 – and being undertaken by the South Australian Research and Development Institute, the University of Adelaide and Environment Protection Authority include: the continued monitoring breeding aggregation population; investigation and assessment of potential alternative spawning areas in the region; research on preferred egg-laying habitat, and a further study on movement patterns and population structure.

Preliminary results of the 2013 population survey indicate an aggregation of approximately 13,500 animals at the renowned Point Lowly site, which is a 27 per cent decline in the population from 2012. The results show a slower pace in the decline compared to an estimated 64 per cent between 2010 and 2011 and 52 per cent between 2011 and 2012.

Minister Gago said while the level of decline had slowed it remained a concern, reinforcing the government's commitment to research and management measures to protect the species.

"This year's surveys have revealed an estimated biomass of 6.8 tonnes of Giant Cuttlefish gathered at the Point Lowly site during the 2013 spawning season," Ms Gago said.

"Research to date had been unable to pinpoint an exact cause for the decline, but work will continue on a range of research projects to investigate and assist the government in making informed decisions for the future protection and recovery of the species.

"As a precautionary measure, a number of fisheries management changes have also been implemented to further protect the species, including the temporary closure to fishing for all cuttlefish in northern Spencer Gulf which was introduced in March this year."

Minister Gago said the short and long-term research projects were identified by the Giant Cuttlefish Working Group to help address significant gaps in knowledge of the population in northern Spencer Gulf.

Media contact: Patrick Cronin 0407 743 068

Community members can continue to assist in the research by helping to monitor and report sightings of Giant Cuttlefish via the Redmap website [www.redmap.org.au](http://www.redmap.org.au) or the Conservation Council SA's Feral or in Peril Program at [www.conservation.sa.gov.au/feral-or-in-peril](http://www.conservation.sa.gov.au/feral-or-in-peril)

\$515,000 in research funding has been granted by the Australian Government through the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation and Department for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities this year to improve knowledge on changes in and impacts on Giant Cuttlefish populations.

The State Government's research commitment of \$200,000 has been contributed by Primary Industries and Regions South Australia, the Department for Manufacturing, Innovation, Trade, Resources and Energy and the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources.



# News Release Minister Gail Gago

Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries  
Minister for Forests  
Minister for Regional Development  
Minister for the Status of Women  
Minister for State/Local Government Relations

Thursday, 20 June, 2013

## Increase in Giant Cuttlefish research funding

The State Government has announced an increase in funding to \$200,000 for research towards the future protection and recovery of Giant Australian Cuttlefish in northern Spencer Gulf.

The funding provides an extra \$50,000 above the \$150,000 announced in March this year to monitor and investigate the population decline of the species in northern Spencer Gulf.

It also brings the total Cuttlefish research commitment by State and Commonwealth Governments to more than \$715,000, with the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) and Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (DSEWPaC) also supporting a number of Cuttlefish projects underway.

Minister for Fisheries Gail Gago said the government's Cuttlefish Working Group had recently considered a number of options and recommended several new research priorities for the 2013 breeding season.

"There is no doubt that the issues facing Cuttlefish populations are complex, but there is also a clear commitment by all levels of Government and the wider community to respond to and address the species decline," Ms Gago said.

"The Cuttlefish Working Group has investigated a number of potential research opportunities and designed a research plan that will improve available knowledge of Giant Cuttlefish populations and help inform decisions about future management measures."

The major research initiatives planned for 2013 include:

- Continued monitoring of the breeding aggregation in northern Spencer Gulf to monitor population numbers, water quality and habitat condition.
- Investigation and assessment of potential alternative Cuttlefish spawning areas within northern Spencer Gulf.
- Research to characterise habitat preferred by Cuttlefish when laying eggs, to inform future research into the scope for artificial habitat to be used to help promote stock recovery and potential scope for stock enhancement.

These projects will be carried out in collaboration with FRDC, which is also funding a study into the movement patterns and population structure of Giant Cuttlefish in northern Spencer Gulf, including an evaluation of any environmental and human impacts that could be causing the population decline in northern Spencer Gulf.

University of Adelaide researchers have also been successful in gaining \$150 000 in funding from DSEWPaC to investigate the potential impacts of shipping on Giant Australian Cuttlefish in response to expected increases in shipping in the Spencer Gulf region.

With research continuing, Ms Gago encourages visitors to the area to exercise care during the breeding season, which typically takes place between May and September each year.

“Given the declining status of the Point Lowly population, I urge all visitors to the area to exercise care and caution in their interactions with the Cuttlefish breeding aggregations and to be mindful to ensure any human interactions do not disturb the animals during this sensitive period of their annual breeding cycle,” Ms Gago said.

State Government funding has been contributed by Primary Industries and Regions SA, the Department for Manufacturing, Innovation, Trade, Resources and Energy and the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources.

Fishers are also reminded that a temporary closure to all fishing for Cuttlefish is currently in place in northern Spencer Gulf until March 2014. The closure includes all waters north of a line commencing near Arno Bay on Eyre Peninsula to Wallaroo on the Yorke Peninsula. Visit [www.pir.sa.gov.au/fisheries](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/fisheries) for details.

Government  
of South Australia

# News Release

## Minister Gail Gago

Minister for Agriculture,  
Food and Fisheries

## Minister Ian Hunter

Minister for Sustainability,  
Environment and Conservation

Wednesday, 27 March, 2013

### Greater protection for the Giant Cuttlefish

The State Government has extended its protection measures for the Giant Cuttlefish while additional research into the population decline of the species at Point Lowly continues.

Minister for Fisheries Gail Gago said effective from tomorrow, taking Cuttlefish from the northern Spencer Gulf from will be prohibited.

"This temporary fishing closure builds on existing closures that the State Government put in place around Point Lowly in 1998.

"The changes I am announcing today will be in place for an initial period of 12 months and subject to annual review.

"The closure only applies to the targeting and take of Cuttlefish, which means that outside of the existing False Bay closure, fishers can continue to fish for squid and octopus.

"Any Cuttlefish inadvertently caught must be immediately and carefully returned to the water.

"It was hoped that recent research and monitoring undertaken by SARDI would provide us with a reason for a possible 90 per cent decline in Giant Cuttlefish numbers at Point Lowly but this research was inconclusive.

"The Giant Cuttlefish is an elusive species and little is known about its movement and migration patterns. As such, we are unable to conclude what is causing the changes to the population.

"Cuttlefish could be aggregating in another area, or the population peaks we are comparing today's counts to could have been an extraordinary event.

"The State Government is also committing \$150,000 to look at continuing this monitoring and to investigate the potential use of artificial reefs to support the species.

"I can also announce today that researchers have been successful in securing additional research funding to continue this important work.

"This new research project, funded by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC), will help to determine the movement patterns and population structure of the Giant Cuttlefish in the Upper Spencer Gulf, as well as evaluate any environmental and human impacts that could be causing the species decline.

"This information will be critical to informing future management measures by helping to reduce the risk of factors contributing to the change in abundance and distribution of the species," Ms Gago said.

Media contacts. Sylvia Rapo 0422 113 224 or Emma Schwartz 0409 558 111

The project, which has commenced this month, will be led by the University of Adelaide and the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI), in partnership with the SA Museum, PIRSA and DEWNR.

Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation Ian Hunter said a working group on Cuttlefish that had been established last year was continuing to address the issues associated with the population decline.

"This group is committed to drive a whole of Government approach to engaging community groups and other key stakeholders in Cuttlefish management and monitoring issues," Mr Hunter said.

"The working group is to be expanded to formally include the Whyalla City Council and the Conservation Council of South Australia. Both are key partners in the process going forward," he said.

The Chief Executive of the Conservation Council Tim Kelly has commended the State Government for this additional protection in the lead up to the annual breeding aggregation which should begin in around just eight weeks.

"With the population of Giant Australian Cuttlefish in the Upper Spencer Gulf at dangerously low numbers it is essential that every cuttlefish be given the best chance for successful breeding in 2013," Mr Kelly said.

"It is also essential for all stakeholders to collaborate with a sense of urgency and work with the community on ways to ensure the future of this unique South Australian population of Cuttlefish," he said.

Members of the public are asked to help monitor the area and report sightings of Giant Cuttlefish in areas where they previously may not have been seen to help monitor their movement and aggregation via the Redmap website [www.redmap.org.au](http://www.redmap.org.au)

For more information about the northern Spencer Gulf fishing closure visit [www.pir.sa.gov.au/fisheries](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/fisheries)

A copy of SARDI's research findings can be found at [http://www.sardi.sa.gov.au/fisheries/publications/2013\\_publications](http://www.sardi.sa.gov.au/fisheries/publications/2013_publications)

# News Release

[www.premier.sa.gov.au](http://www.premier.sa.gov.au)



**Hon Michael O'Brien**

Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries

Minister for Forests

Minister for Energy

Minister for the Northern Suburbs

Thursday, 15 September 2011

## **FUNDING WELCOMED FOR GIANT CUTTLEFISH RESEARCH**

Fisheries Minister Michael O'Brien has welcomed Commonwealth assistance to monitor the breeding and habitat of Giant Cuttlefish in the Upper Spencer Gulf.

Mr O'Brien said a grant of \$74,162 from the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) would support State Government efforts to learn more about why cuttlefish numbers have declined.

"Last month I announced stronger protection measures for Giant Cuttlefish while scientific work is undertaken to determine why stock numbers are falling," the Minister said.

"SARDI scientists were deployed to undertake a scoping study ahead of establishing a research program for the next breeding season.

"Giant Cuttlefish are an iconic species, highly regarded in Whyalla and throughout South Australia.

"It's important we learn more about them to make informed decisions for their future protection."

Mr O'Brien said the FRDC funding would help to design a monitoring and evaluation program for Giant Cuttlefish, with particular reference to population biomass, water quality and habitat condition.

"The Whyalla council and community groups have indicated an immediate need for surveys to better understand the status of the stock and the cause of any decline," Mr O'Brien said.

"A whole-of-government approach is being taken to implement this program.

"On completion of this project, we will know how the 2012 spawning aggregation compares to the limited historical data available, which will help to draw some preliminary conclusions."

SARDI is contributing \$31,111 to the \$105,273 project over two years.



Monday, 7 May 2012

**Contact** Joanna Tsoukalas, Communications Manager, PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture, 8226 2922 / 0417 290 418

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## Additional closure to enhance Giant Cuttlefish protection

The State Government has announced an extension to the closure area currently in place in Spencer Gulf in a move to further protect the iconic Giant Cuttlefish ahead of the 2012 breeding season.

The temporary closure is effective immediately and will see a ban on recreational and commercial fishing for all cephalopods (including cuttlefish, squid and octopus) in the extension area, until 30 September 2012.

Commencing from the Point Lowly Lighthouse and following the eastern boundary of the existing closure area, the temporary closure area will extend 100 m offshore from the high water mark and follow the coastline to a point 100 m south of the boat ramp breakwater near Point Lowly. See map overpage.

Executive Director for PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture, Professor Mehdi Doroudi, said the additional closure was a precautionary measure to ensure a maximum level of protection for Giant Cuttlefish aggregation while additional monitoring is undertaken.

"Given the current management arrangements in place, it's very unlikely that commercial or recreational fishing poses a threat to Giant Cuttlefish populations," Professor Doroudi said.

"However, this extension covers an identified breeding ground for Giant Cuttlefish, so it's important that we take this precautionary step and offer greater protection to the species while information is being gathered to better understand the population.

"This is in addition to steps we are taking to convert the existing closure in False Bay to become a permanent and ongoing closure."

Professor Doroudi said research was currently underway by the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) to investigate fluctuations in South Australia's Giant Cuttlefish population.

"Anecdotal evidence from the community has indicated that cuttlefish numbers have declined in recent years, however to date we have not had access to regular and robust scientific data to confirm that trend," he said.

"SARDI is currently working on a project to establish the foundation for a long term, organised monitoring program that will provide access to accurate data on how the population fluctuates.

"This will involve regular surveys during the 2012 spawning season to develop a standard methodology for how the data is collected and interpreted."

More information about the closure extension is available at [www.pir.sa.gov.au/fisheries](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/fisheries)

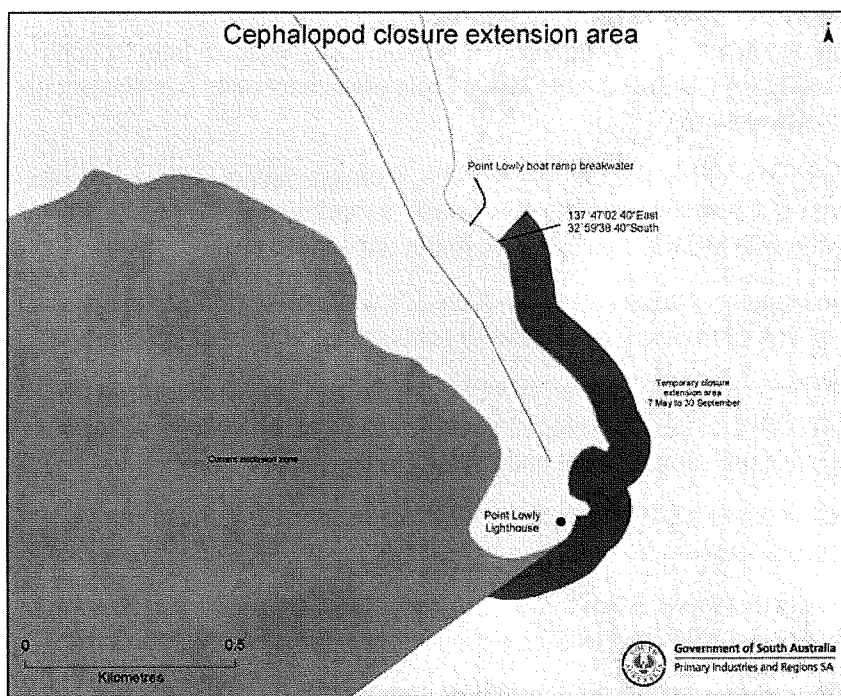
With the 2012 breeding season expected to commence shortly, members of the public are asked to help monitor the area to ensure compliance with the closure.

Suspicious or illegal fishing behaviour can be reported to FISHWATCH on 1800 065 522. Callers can choose to remain anonymous.

growing  
sustainable  
regions

## Map of closure extension area

The temporary closure extension area includes all waters bound by a line commencing from the Point Lowly Lighthouse and following the eastern boundary of the existing closure area to 100 m offshore from the high water mark and then following the coastline to a point 100 m south of the boat ramp breakwater near Port Lowly.





# News Release

[www.premier.sa.gov.au](http://www.premier.sa.gov.au)



**Hon Michael O'Brien**  
Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries  
Minister for Forests  
Minister for Energy  
Minister for the Northern Suburbs

Sunday, 28 August 2011

## **GOVERNMENT MOVES TO ENHANCE CUTTLEFISH PROTECTION**

Fisheries Minister Michael O'Brien today announced the State Government will move to further protect Giant Cuttlefish in the Upper Spencer Gulf.

Mr O'Brien said the decline in cuttlefish numbers was both puzzling and disturbing.

"The Government is determined to ensure a maximum level of protection while research is undertaken to explain the cause of the disappearance," he said.

"A number of explanations have been put forward, but all are speculative until we have quality data from which to draw informed conclusions.

"In the meantime, I am invoking the precautionary principle, which underpins the Fisheries Management Act."

Mr O'Brien, who attended high school in Whyalla, said he understood the Giant Cuttlefish was an iconic species, much loved and appreciated by Whyalla residents and visitors.

"I have talked to Whyalla locals, SARDI scientists and relevant government departments to gather as much information as possible," he said.

"I have been told we don't have enough data over a long enough time period to accurately quantify what level of reduction there has been this year.

"What I do know is this aggregation is highly valued by the community and they want it protected."

### **The State Government will:**

- Convert the existing temporary closure in False Bay to become a permanent and ongoing closure;
- Close an additional small area immediately adjacent to the Point Lowly headland that is a known breeding area, but is not currently included in the closed area;
- Implement a more comprehensive monitoring program for Giant Cuttlefish.

"The monitoring program will span a time period that is sufficient to pick up the seasonal and dynamic changes in the Cuttlefish population," Mr O'Brien said.

“I intend to involve Whyalla schools and residents in helping SARDI scientists to gather baseline data.”

Mr O’Brien said the seasonal variability of Giant Cuttlefish numbers in the Upper Spencer Gulf may occur due to environmental conditions.

“Given the current management arrangements in place, it is very unlikely that commercial or recreational fishing poses a threat to Giant Cuttlefish populations in South Australian waters,” he said.

“We know that Giant Cuttlefish populations are characterised by high natural variations from year to year.

“These are linked to changes in environmental factors such as water temperature, salinity, water circulation and weather patterns.”

Giant Cuttlefish are currently protected through a closure under the Fisheries Management Act, which prohibits the taking of all cephalopods (squid, cuttlefish and octopus) at all times in the waters of False Bay near Whyalla.

The closure has been in place since 1999 and was initially introduced as a seasonal closure to protect Giant Cuttlefish during their annual spawning season (March to September).

The closure was implemented following research undertaken by SARDI in the late 1990s, which identified the unique nature of the location as a breeding site for Giant Cuttlefish.